

BACK TO THE BASICS (INTRO)

1 John 1:1-4

If want good theology, study Pauline epistles.

If want moral excellence, study James.

If want to catch the heart beat of Christianity, study John, Gospel of love.

If want to no-froth, no holds barred, straight-forward bottom line of Christian life, study epistles of John.

I. Author-John, the Beloved (Dove).

Son of Zebedee, wealthy businessman.

Fisherman

Nicknamed, son of thunder

Vigevano: *John had a sensitive, gentle spirit, but he was also capable of anger, flare-ups, outbursts. He had a temper. He was excitable, impulsive. ... He grew in love and understanding. There is no question about it....he came a long way!*

Mac: *John was sectarian, narrow-minded, unbending and ridiculously intolerant, but those characteristics became strength in his character because he had a tremendous capacity for love.*

Disciple of Jesus. Came to Jesus when John the Baptist pointed Jesus out as Lamb of God.

Apostle: chose by Jesus after all night prayer meeting.

Early years

1. Intolerance
2. Selfish Ambition
3. Bad temper.

Later years

1. Compassion
2. Faithfulness
3. Truth
4. Love.

After Christ ascended John served another 70 years. Banished to Patmos at 90 years.

Died at 99.

Wrote 5 books: Gospel of John, Epistles of John, Revelation

II. Background

Written some time in last quarter of the 1st century.

Written from Ephesus, hometown of John during later years of ministry

General epistle: to churches in Asia.

III. Purpose

1. Practical encouragement. edify “children” in true faith and life as Christians. 1 John 1:4

Boice: broken down into three basic challenges:

1. Truth—sure knowledge of Jesus Christ
2. Righteousness—desire to pursue and obey the commandments of Christ.
3. Love—a new relationship with other believers.

2. Polemic: Several members had split church and in process of starting own work.

Many were philosophers ...deeply entrenched in Gnosticism.

Gnostics believed & taught:

1. Spirit is good and matter is evil.

Christ not Savior; only a revealer. Only came for purpose of revealing secret gnosis

Incarnation not reasonable

- Docetism: Christ not assume human body but only appeared to have one. Deny Christ came in flesh.
- Cerinthianism: Jesus and Christ were two different individuals.

2. Human spirit trapped inside material body.

Dodd: *Some of the heretics believed themselves to be so far above good and evil that their conduct scandalized even the easy going censors of Roman society.*

IV. Style. Simple...deep. Authoritative. Inductive ... Ultimates

V. Basic Doctrines-Big rocks

A. Old Fashioned gospel.

B. The Historical Christ. 1 John 1:3; 2:1, 22

Change the doctrine of Christ and you change Christianity.

C. Security of the Believer. 1 John 5:13

D. Consistent lifestyle of obedience to the light. 1 John 1:7

Theme: do your lives back up evidence of God's presence?

E. Love. 1 John 2:9-10; 4:7-8

Conclusion: If you want to get the no-froth, no holds barred, straight-forward bottom line of the Christian life, read and study with us the three epistles/letters of John.